

perne angulata; peristomate continuo, subreflexo; anfractu ultimo subumbilicato.

“Animal *Melaniæ* simile, proboscide elongata, antice emarginata; tentaculis filiformibus duobus oculos postice prope basin gerentibus; pede mediocri ovato, antice subquadrato. Operculo corneo subspirali.

“*T. montana.*

“*T.* testa olivacea, ovato-conica; anfractibus sex, rotundatis, suturis impressis; apertura intus albida; peristomate nigrescente; apice obtuso, plerumque decollato.

“Hab. in rivo, apud lacum Kemaonensem Bhimtâl dictum.

“This little shell I first found adhering to the prone surface of a leaf of *Potamogeton*, in a clear and weedy stream running through a marsh at the head of Bheemtâl and supplying that lake; and subsequently Dr. Bacon and myself found it abundantly on the stems of a water Iris which we drew up by the roots from the bed of the stream for examination.”

I further remarked that it exhibited a tendency towards *Paludina* in form and in the continuity and incrassation of the peristome.

Cheltenham, Nov. 12, 1862.

XLIV.—On the Unicorn of the Ancients.

By the Rev. W. HOUGHTON, M.A., F.L.S.

To the Editors of the *Annals and Magazine of Natural History.*

GENTLEMEN,

I hasten to correct a serious error which I committed in my paper “On the Unicorn of the Ancients,” published in the last Number of your Magazine. I there stated (p. 369) that “the animal which Mr. Rüppell was told by a native existed in Africa, and which had a long straight horn growing from its forehead(?), was doubtless a Rhinoceros.” I grounded this somewhat hasty conclusion on a short paragraph that appeared in the twentieth volume of the ‘*Asiatic Journal*’ (July 1825), published the year before Rüppell’s ‘*Atlas zu der Reise im nördlichen Africa.*’ I have since referred to this work, in which, at pt. i. p. 29, Mr. Rüppell has made some observations on the Unicorn, which, under the name of *Nillekma*, is known to the natives of Kordofan. “The accounts which I obtained,” this traveller remarks (p. 30), “from persons of the greatest respectability concerning the *Nillekma* all perfectly agreed,—to wit, the animal’s hide was of a reddish colour, its size that of a pony, its form slender like the Antelope’s; the male had a long straight horn upon its brow, which was wanting in the female. Some added that it

has cloven hoofs, others said the hoof was entire. It inhabits, according to report, the desert lying south of Kordofan, and is remarkably swift."

From this it is quite clear that this supposed animal is something very different from any species of Rhinoceros. I ought, therefore, perhaps to modify my assertion when I boldly denied the existence of any such animal, seeing that so distinguished a naturalist as Edward Rüppell was inclined to believe in it. But even if future investigations should result in the discovery of such an animal as that described above (which, to say the least, is in the highest degree improbable), it is certain that it can have nothing to do with the two-horned *R'ém* of the Bible, nor, as it seems to me, with any of the one-horned animals mentioned in the writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans. The authority for the existence of the animal rests entirely upon the assertions of natives, whose veracity is not often to be depended upon. I remember being told by a traveller in Palestine that it is perfectly useless to attempt to obtain reliable information from the Arabs of that country. They will tell a traveller almost anything that comes into their heads, no matter how improbable it may be,—though in the question at issue it is but fair to state that Mr. Rüppell was perfectly satisfied with the accuracy of the information he had received from his native servant on questions relating to animals.

With regard to the zoological objection to the possibility of the existence of an animal with a single horn on the middle of the forehead (*viz.* that no horn can grow upon a suture), Mr. Rüppell replies by instancing the case of the Giraffe, the male of which, he states, is possessed of a third horn, placed on the very centre of the frontal suture. This fact, though denied by Prof. Owen, was maintained by Cuvier, and has lately been insisted upon by Dr. Cobbold.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Very truly yours,

Preston Rectory, Nov. 3, 1862.

W. HOUGHTON.

XLV.—*On the Animal and Float of Ianthina.*

By ARTHUR ADAMS, F.L.S. &c.

IN the North Atlantic Ocean, about four hundred miles from the Azores, I obtained a considerable number of lively *Ianthinas*; and I believe there are one or two points of interest in the history of this beautiful Mollusk which deserve mention, as they seem to have escaped the notice of previous observers. I will first of all consider the animal, and then the float by means of which it is supported at the surface of the water.